

## Commission Comments by Jim Hart

The two new Madison County Commissioners, Lewis Stahl and Jim Hart, have hit the ground running, along with current Commissioner Dave Schulz. Madison County will truly miss retired Commissioners Ted Coffman and Frank Nelson, who both did an excellent job overseeing the county's needs during their watches. Continued health, some wealth, and much happiness are extended to each of these outstanding men.

Besides Schulz's every day work, he has an additional burden of getting Lewis and Jim up to speed, but he's handling it with his usual casual, cooperative, and organized ease. To add to his and the office's concerns, Administrative Assistant Laurie Buyan fell on the ice shortly before Christmas and broke her leg in two places. Sadly, she has been "out of commission" the last couple of weeks but looks forward to returning with her leg in a cast this next week. Janie Alt from the Weed Department has filled in nicely for Laurie in her absence, and we truly appreciate her help and smiling face in the office. All of us, Dave particularly, miss Laurie's expertise immensely and look forward to her return. Laurie is a tremendous asset in the Commissioners' Office. We plan to make her return as burden free as we can, understanding, in the least sense, how difficult it will be for her simply to negotiate the courthouse stairs, not to mention to handle her daily work load with her usual outstanding competency, without causing additional complications to her leg.

Road maintenance continues to be part of the daily routine. Each of the three Districts continues to do an outstanding job. Occasional glitches, like an ordinance for road closure except to snowmobile for various roads throughout the county during the winter from Dec 1 to April 15, most specifically the upper Madison, have been discussed amicably and fairly, ending with all parties concerned understanding its necessity.

Emergency management, likewise, continues to be an ongoing strategy. Emergency Management Coordinator Frank Ford has stepped toward a more consulting avenue, leaving his position to newly hired coordinator Chris Mumme. Like the new commissioners, Chris will have a steep learning curve the next several months, but with Frank's aid, appears to be transitioning comfortably and quickly.

Noxious weed control is also an issue to keep in mind, even during the winter months. A discussion in conjunction with Jefferson County appears to be creating a cooperative effort in that area. More discussion and cooperation will occur as spring and summer approach.

The Madison Growth Solutions process continues, as an ongoing effort to work collaboratively in the Madison Valley to plan for the future. A draft action plan has been prepared, but some adjustments need to be made to address concerns that were raised last fall. A work session to move forward on this action plan is scheduled for Friday, January 26, from 11:00 am - 3:00 pm at the Ennis Fire Hall. This is a public meeting with opportunities for all present to share their comments and ideas. Ultimately, the goal is to manage growth in a collaborative way in the Madison Valley. Eventual adoption of an action plan can help focus our efforts in this direction.

In a nutshell, that's an update for now; we look forward to keeping Madison County abreast of goings-on in the future.